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The Martlet

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NINTH ANNUAL

QUEER ISSUE

Visibility a key issue for UVic's LGBA

by Adam Turner

Many queer students spend their entire university careers in the closet.

Others seek a safe place to go, community support, and want to be visible and politically active.

These are some of the reasons that UVic's queers created the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance. LGBA members Tathra Street, lisa j lander and Daniel Cunningham talked about these issues and the role of the group at UVic. The LGBA is just one part of Victoria's wide and diverse queer community.

For UVSS director-at-large Tathra Street, the LGBA is an integral part of her social life. She is a member of a bisexual community that seeks wider recognition within queer society.

Lisa j lander defines her community as a "family of women.".

For those like Daniel Cunningham, a director of the LGBA, it is "the only community for those who live on campus." He found that there is no parallel group at UVic that could provide the same level of support.

For others, the LGBA is the starting point for coming out.

Not everyone within the LGBA is comfortable with political activism. For the past two years the organization has held separate political and social meetings to accommodate all members. "There has to be a comfort level," Daniel Cunningham said.

The activists within the LGBA may be making more impact in increasing visibility for queers on campus, but the social events are becoming popular too.

The desire for more visibility has meant a change in approach for LGBA events.

Visibility is the key this year for lander, saying that it is a direct action "anytime that we take up visible space on campus." The queer issue of *the Martlet* is an example; it is about becoming more visible, lander explained. Claiming space is not always about the overtly political. She considers an upcoming March dance the LGBA is having to be a direct action. "Let's take up some space and not be so invisible," she said.

The desire for greater visibility has meant a change in approach for LGBA events. In the past they were usually closed. Now events are more open. Openness can be empowering, but, lander said, it can also mean backlash for members of the LGBA.

The LGBA has struggled to establish itself at UVic. About three years ago some members felt that there were people who were taking away the LGBA's right to be on campus.

Tathra Street pointed out that this is why the LGBA must have status as a constituency group. The controversial constituency groups,.which were established at this year's UVSS annual general meeting, provide voting members to the UVSS board of directors for groups such as the LGBA and the Women's Centre.

Street sees the constituency group status as vital in giving queers on campus a "voice."

Lander rejects the argument that constituency groups on campus are undemocratic. She said that students such as queers, women of colour and disabled people "don't get voted in because we are not the norm." Drawing on her experience as a student union representative at Douglas College, Street said "there would have been important issues to me as a queer person and a dyke that would not have come up" if she had not been there.

Cunningham felt that constituency representation will prevent the "very draining and painful" experience of last October's Annual General Meeting, and will give the LGBA security as a recognized group.

A comprehensive set of by-law changes were proposed by the Coalition for Democratic Reform at the October AGM. It was a group led by politicians dissatisfied with the current left-wing policies of the UVSS. The by-laws were to create new groups on campus such as a men's centre and Greek council (a governing body for fraternities). The LGBA were suspiciously excluded from the proposals.

At the time, the LGBA did not have any legal status other than as a UVSS club. The UVSS had made legal mistakes in trying to form a separate status for the LGBA twice. An attempt was made to consider the LGBA a "Branch" society of the UVSS. It was rejected as invalid by the Society of Registrars, the legal authority for societies in BC.

Homophobia is still alive on this campus.

Lander conceded that the UVSS has had queer representation on the UVSS but stressed that there is a "difference between people who might be assumed and people who are visibly out and taking space," said lander. Street agreed, saying "people didn't vote for me because I was queer."

Stacey Tabert, last year's Director of Academics, has been chosen as the representative for the LGBA. She cannot take her place until the legal status of the LGBA has been cleared up.

Constituency groups also provide a place for those who are too intimidated by homophobia to run in an election, lander said.

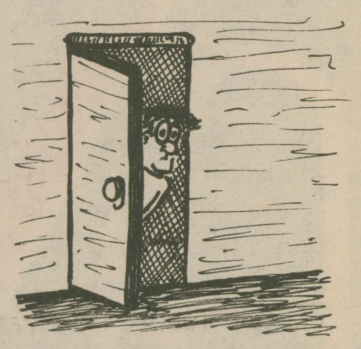
Lander said that those people who have problems with the influence of the LGBA on UVSS decision making should talk about the issues instead of criticizing the LGBA for taking up space.

Homophobia is still alive on this campus. The proof is the need for security at LGBA dances. "If the chess club took over the multi-purpose room would they need security?" lander asked.

For now the LGBA is looking forward to their space in the new SUB and planning for a February 14 coffeehouse.

As for the experience of putting out a *Martlet* supplement, lander said, "there are times when I have issues with what's printed in *the Martlet*", but the queer issue has been an important part of increasing visibility and was appreciated by the group."

One basic thought underlies all these issues, lander said. "We have the right to be here like everyone else."



Notice of General Election
University of Victoria Students' Society

University of Victoria Students' Society period for submission of nomination:
Nominations open: February 6, 1996 at 10:00 a.m.
Nominations close: February 16, 1996 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)

Nomination packages are available at the Students' Society Resource Centre, SUB, Room 135.
Completed forms must be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer, in the Students' Society Resource Centre.

The campaigning period runs from Monday, February 26, 1996 at 8:00 a.m. to Monday, March 11, 1996 at midnight.

The date by which mail-out ballots shall be considered duly cast is Thursday, March 14, 1996.

Polling days run March 12, 13 and 14.

The positions available are as follows:
- eleven Director-at-Large positions
- four executive positions: Director of Academics, Director of Services, Director of Finance and Chairperson, and
- the official representatives of the YES and NO sides of the following referendum questions:

Are you in favour of the following increase in the collection of students' fees:

That the student fee be increased by $.50 per full-time student per term ($.25 per part-time student per term) to establish a Scholarship Fund to assist International Students in financial need to pursue and continue education at the University of Victoria?.

YES_____ NO_____

Are you in favour of the following increase in the collection of students' fees:

That the combined provincial and national Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) fee be increased by $2.25 per full-time student per term to a total of $6.00 ($3.00 total per part-time student) to implement the change approved at the 1993 General Meetings of the Canadian Federation of Students.

YES_____ NO_____

For more information, call the Chief Electoral Officer at 721-8366

Tathra Street-

I identify as a biDyke (bisexual dyke). Visibility is an important tool for fighting homophobia. For me it is important to be out because i think the broader community needs to see that same sex love is normal and OK. I hope that some day people won't be freaked out when I kiss my girlfriend in public. I never thought that heterosexual visibility and omnipotence would make me mad but recently i found that when i see a man and a woman kiss in public, anger wells up in me. It is frustrating that they don't have to worry about the whispers or punches that might result from their kiss as queers do.

It sure would make my life easier if i didn't worry about this stuff, but i believe that if we hide behind privilege, we are contributing to the problem. Perhaps i do have some amount of heterosexual privilege, as a bisexual woman but it doesn't mean i won't do everything in my power to fight homophobia, including biphobia.

I wish all this weren't so political and that i could just love the way i please but in a heterosexist world we must fight the ignorance bred by the dominant value system. We can't allow homophobia to make us invisible or silent.

There is a song by Chumba-wumba called 'Homophobia-the worst disease' that says, "Love how you want to love and love who you please." ▼

Homophobia and Visibility

Tracy - aka Rant Bitch-

i have to start this piece by screaming, WAKE UP VICTORIA- dykes are everywhere! i've seen straight couples kissing passionately at a bus stop, gettin' it on in the corner of a restaurant, etc., and yet, when i want to hold my girlfriends' hand or give her a kiss goodbye i have to worry about the world watching/judging us....

i will continue to be natural about my loving feelings and impulses towards my girlfriend whether we're in public, around our families, at school or at work, wherever and whenever i want to...

the other day, Helen and i were walking from the library to uvic centre (where the car was parked), it had been a long and harsh day for me and i was so happy to see her, i put my arm around her as we left the library and that's when i noticed Kevin, he bowed his head & walked out of our path, so we walked right past him, i felt sad and angry at the same time, i wanted to say hi Kev, but he didn't want to deal with my open display of lesbianism, he's always seemed cool about me being a dyke (i guess on a theoretical level), but visibility is obviously another issue for him.

there is not one day where i can feel free from homophobia, every time i make myself visible as a dyke i have to deal with Your disapproving stares, gestures & comments- just a short bit of advice, get a fuckin' life and leave me alone to pursue mine. ▼

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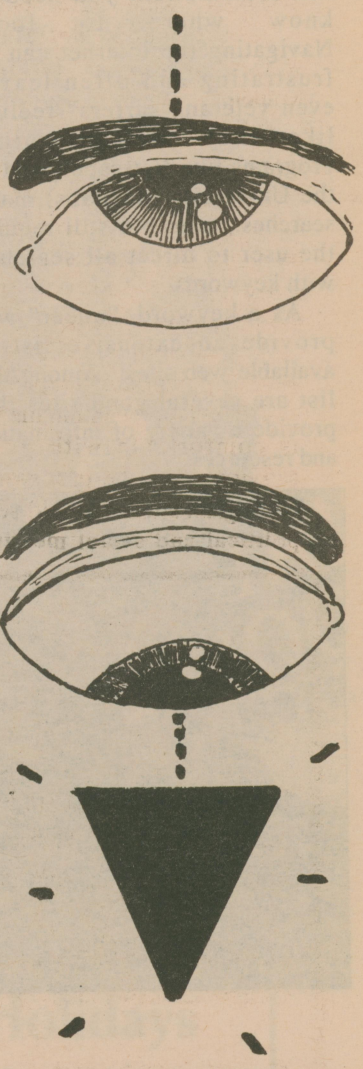

daniel cunningham aka Queen of Res-

Living in residence can be a mixed experience. The people on my floor are wonderful to be around - funny, caring, supportive, and mostly homo-friendly. But I don't always feel safe. For instance, the other night there was a group of guys outside my door. As they went down the hall past my room someone said rather loudly "Fucking queer!". It wouldn't even bother me so much if they had the guts to say it to my face - but no, they can't do that - I might, heaven forbid, check out their ass or make a pass at them. For all those heterosexist, homophobic jerks who are afraid that gay men might look at them the way they look at women, a bit of advice - get over it! - why would we want to look at someone like you - Ew! Yuck! ▼

Some thoughts on queer visibility

- by Mira Goldberg

As someone whose main activist work is to help bring out queer voices that are not usually heard, both inside & outside the queer community, I consistently run up against a reluctance, on the part of many queers, to present the full complexity of queer lives and queer cultures. There's been a lot of lip service paid to "diversity" in queer communities, but I haven't seen many queers with privilege really take on struggles against racism, classism, etc. There <u>have</u> been some important victories thanks to the persistent work by queers of color/two-spirited women & men, transgendered folks, dis/abled queers, old fags & dykes, Jewish queers, working class queers, assorted allies, and many, many others who fight daily against oppression.

It's almost as if some queers feel the best way to gain acceptance is to present ourselves as "normal", as defined by a racist, classist, straight and otherwise pretty fucked up society. Firstly, this concept of a "normal" gay/lesbian assumes that this society's norms are something we aspire to (heaven forbid). Secondly, assimilation is simply not a viable long-term survival strategy. If it didn't work for Jews in Germany in the 1930s, why should it work for us now?

Thinking about diversity, I also think of the richness of queer voices that we have had taken from us - by racist judges & police, by queer bashers, by the Nazis, by homophobic AIDS policies & substandard health care, by dying from unsafe working conditions, by life on the streets, by the grinding of poverty, by state torture & murder, by expropriation of peoples' lands/ means of survival, by war, by alcohol & drugs & suicide used to escape from brutal violence, by so many so many so many forms of oppression & genocide. Equally sad, to me, is the silence & ignorance of many queers on these kinds of visibility issues.

This year, I will be proudly walking in Pride parades as a proxy for a lesbian political prisoner. Being a proxy means carrying a placard with the name & picture of my jailed sister, to remind people that she is part of our community. One of my political fantasies is to see <u>all</u> queers represented at a Pride Day parade or other queer event: by proxies, by coalition building and greater inclusivity, and by outrageous memorials for our proud ancestors who have kicked, screamed & celebrated before us. When this day comes it will indeed be a moment of pride for me as a queer ▼

COREEN HANSON-

I'M HERE! I'M QUEER! ... AND I'M SILENT.

I AM SOMEWHAT VISIBLE - I WEAR MY BUTTONS AND MY DOUBLE WOMYN'S SYMBOL JEWELRY ... BUT I DO NOT SPEAK. WHY? BECAUSE I HAVEN'T GIVEN MYSELF A QUEER VOICE YET. I HAVEN'T WALKED THE WHOLE MILE IN QUEER SHOES YET. I'M GETTING CLOSE, BUT I HAVEN'T QUITE ARRIVED ... THE DOOR HAS BEEN LEFT WIDE OPEN FOR ME. I KNOW ... BUT I'M STILL TAKING SLOW STEPS.

"25 YEARS OLD, KISSED 3 BOYS AND NEVER KISSED A GIRL!"

MOST OR ALL OF THE HOMOPHOBIA THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED HAS COME FROM WITHIN ME - ESPECIALLY DURING MY FIRST YEAR OF COMING OUT, BUT SINCE THEN AS WELL. I EXPECT THAT MY INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA WILL RE-EXPLODE ONCE I HAVE A WOMYN LOVER - I.E. WHEN I TRY TO SHOW MY LOVE AND AFFECTION FOR HER IN PUBLIC.

I AM VERY AFFECTIONATE WITH MY WONDERFUL WIMMIN-FRIENDS NOW, AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK. BUT I EXPECT THAT I WILL HAVE NEW FEELINGS, LIKE FEAR AND SHAME, WHEN I EXPRESS THE SAME PUBLIC AFFECTION TOWARDS A WOMYN LOVER. I SUSPECT THAT I WILL THEN BE MORE VULNERABLE TO OTHER PEOPLE'S HOMOPHOBIA.

I'M HERE! I'M QUEER! AND I'M STARTING TO CLAIM MY VOICE ... FOR THERE ARE NO PRE-REQUISITES TO SPEAKING OUT.

P.S. I AM REALLY FUCKING ANGRY (AT MYSELF AND ESPECIALLY AT OUR CULTURE) THAT IT TOOK ME OVER 22 YEARS TO REALIZE THAT LOVING WIMMIN COULD BE A REALITY FOR ME! LIKE MOST CANADIANS, I WAS SOCIALIZED FIRST TO BE OBLIVIOUS, THEN TO BE AFRAID OF DIFFERENCE. BUT I DON'T REGRET THAT SINCE THIS WONDERFUL REALIZATION, I HAVE TAKEN THE TIME I'VE NEEDED TO MAKE IT MY OWN REALITY. ▼

Queer sites add dimension to cyberspace

by Kevin Woodley

The internet is everywhere. It allows anyone who can use a computer to access an almost unbelievable amount of information. Newsgroups, chatlines, product information and shopping networks combine to form only a small section of the resources available on the internet.

But what if you're not interested in a listing of the new line of cars from Ford Motors? Suppose you want information about queer lifestyles and you can't seem to find it in the mainstream media. Perhaps you can find what you are looking for by going on-line.

There are several sites available that can help you find information and resource centres that deal with gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender issues.

Before you can access any of this information, you need to know where to look. Navigating the internet can be frustrating and often leaves even veteran "surfers" feeling like they are drowning. Programs like Netscape (used in the University MacLabs) make searches easier but still require the user to direct all searches with keywords.

As a keyword, "queer" will provide an extensive list of available web sites. Among this list are several good sites that provide a variety of information and resources:

-The CyberQueer Lounge
at http://cyberzine.org/html/GLAIDS/glaidshomepage.html

•this site includes, among countless other things, action alerts, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) chat sites, and a listing of LGBT events around the globe.

-Queer Resources Directory
at http://www.qrd.org/QRD/

•this site provides a massive archive of files about everything queer, and allows users to make selections from listed files.

There are several other web sites that also provide services to the user. Among these sites the better ones include:

-Out Now!
at http://www.zoom.com/outnow/

•this gay newspaper has been distributed on the internet since 1994.

-Out
at http://www.out.com/

•this site is produced by the people at *Out* magazine. Like the magazine, it is devoted to gay, lesbian and bisexual images.

-Annie Sprinkles Public Cervix Announcement
at http://www.infi.net/~heck/cervix main.html

•upon entering this site the user is greeted with: "Welcome to my intervaginal superhighway where the wonderful world of the cervix awaits you... anytime." While visiting, you are encouraged to see "How to Perform a Cervix Self-Exam" or take a look at Annie's cervix.

One of the problems with the above addresses is that they all originate from the United States. There are Canadian-produced pages and they can be found under:

-Canadian Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Resource Directory
at http://www.cglrd.com/

•from this site alone, the user can access 1220 items from 92 different locations.

Out.com
Online With America's Best-Selling Gay & Lesbian Magazine

Resources can be accessed by either location (geographical) or category, and include news items, chat lines, electronic shopping guides, and listings of all Canadian agencies involved with gay, lesbian or bisexual issues.

To explore any of these topics on the internet all you need to do is take your student card to the MacLab (located in Clearihue A-wing) and enter the Netscape program in the MacLab H.D. icon. While you're surfing, be sure to visit UVic's own Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance at:

http://www.cglbrd.com/entries/1177.html ❑

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Family is not a heterosexual word

the excalibur, York University

TORONTO (CUP) – Emily's face lights up and she nods with excitement as Kim, her mother, offers her a box of books.

Delighted, she climbs from the lap of Sharon, also her mother, and waddles over. Sharon and Kim, who have been together for 12 years, smile proudly at their 20-month-old daughter before turning back to chat about their experiences as lesbian parents.

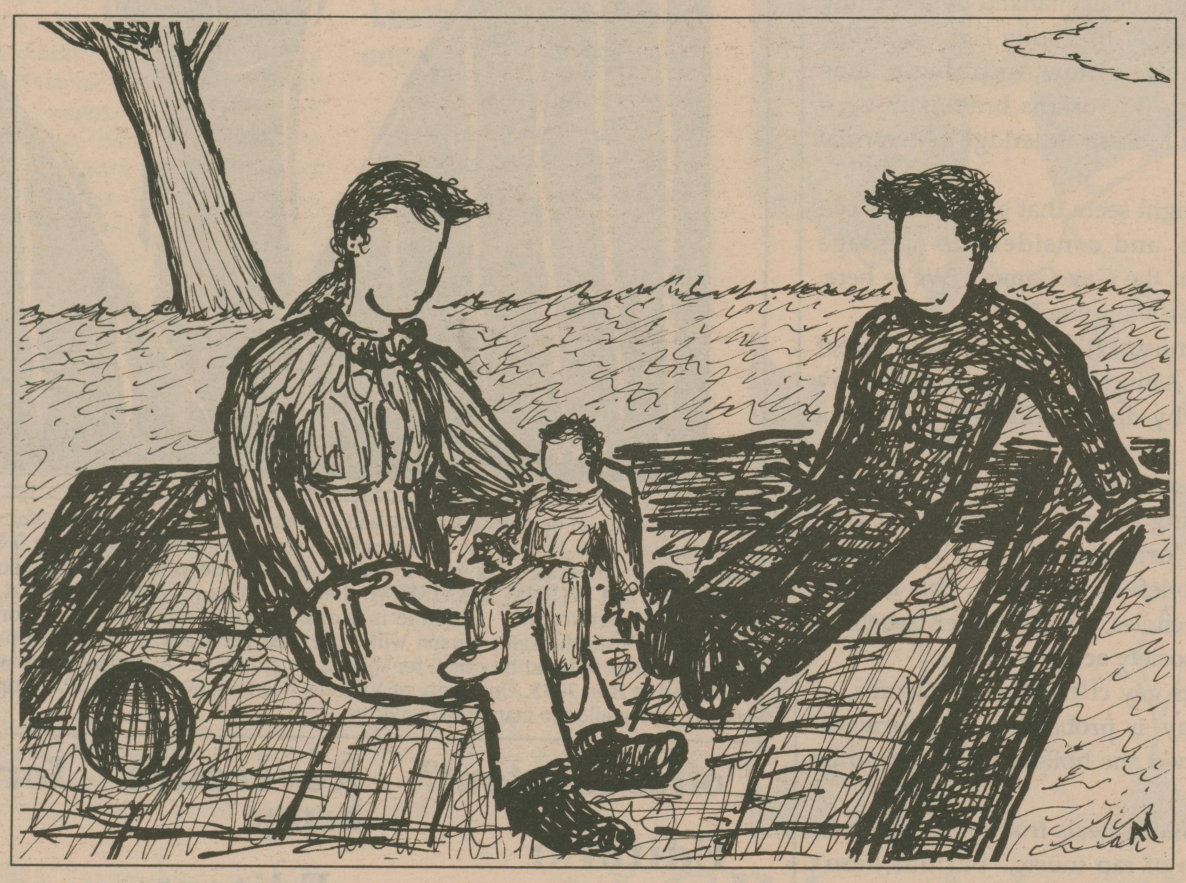
The decision to have a child was neither fast nor easy for the two women.They faced concerns about the child's safety, the impregnation process, and finding a healthy donor.

Sharon and Kim settled on a known donor and chose artificial insemination, eliminating the need for costly doctors or clinics. They were helped by a group that supports gay couples who want to have children.

Both feel that if Emily ever wants to learn about her biological roots, that information will be made available to her.

In Emily's eyes, she has two mothers; she calls them both "mommy" and loves both equally. Unfortunately, with the defeat of Ontario's bill 167 in 1994, Kim, as the non-biological mother, continues to have no legal rights as Emily's parent.

"It pissed us off royally," Sharon says, pointing out that if anything happens to her or Emily, Kim would be left with no parental or spousal rights.



For Sharon and Kim, the defeated bill means continued non-recognition of their family and their legal rights as parents.

Though their existence is negated from a legal point of view, both women have found acceptance and support in their families and the community.

"My mother considers Emily her first grandchild," Kim says. Sharon adds, "When we were thinking of having a child, my mom was scared of the world, not about us being bad mothers."

Twice a week, Emily and Kim attend a play-school group. After finding out that Kim is a lesbian, some mothers began to avoid her. Kim attributes this to their embarrassment and discomfort, and says Emily is treated no differently by these women or their children.

Since school is becoming a chief concern in Emily's future, both women have decided they will be "out" to her teachers from the beginning. They hope this will create a safe and comfortable school environment for their daughter.

It was their own needs and the needs of other lesbian parents that prompted the two women to start the Lesbian Parenting Group last May.

"We wanted Emily to see other children with lesbian parents," Sharon says.

Sharon and Kim consider themselves coordinators of this organization, but say that all the women involved share the planning and work.

The Lesbian Parenting Group expanded from a picnic in Sharon and Kim's backyard, attended by 40 women and children, to an organization of 150 members who regularly organize picnics and parties.

When Kim and Sharon first met, the idea of lesbians having children was perceived as surrender to a male-dominant society.

"Now, however, I think that this has to be the farthest thing from patriarchy," she says, hugging their daughter. ❑

Queer directory published locally

by Patti Edgar

A group hoping to improve communication and co-operation in the diverse queer community has released the island's first issue of the *Pink Pages*.

The *Pink Pages* is a directory of gay, lesbian, bisexual and supportive businesses, organizations, and support services. The directory was compiled by the Pink Umbrella, a local networking group.

The directory is twice as thick as the group anticipated.

"There are so many diverse groups, organizations and individuals in our community," said Stephanie Boyd, a spokesperson for the Pink Umbrella. "We needed a clearing house for information and a way to support our community."

The *Pink Pages* is a success, she said, adding that the directory is twice as thick as the group anticipated.

Compiling an annual directory is only one of the goals of the Pink Umbrella. The organization, formed in January, 1995, represents a broad cross section of community groups, business services, agencies and individuals.

"We try to have a representative from each group," Boyd said, adding that there are currently 40 representatives on the roster. She said each representative can take what the Pink Umbrella discusses, present it to the organization they represent , and then bring back the responses.

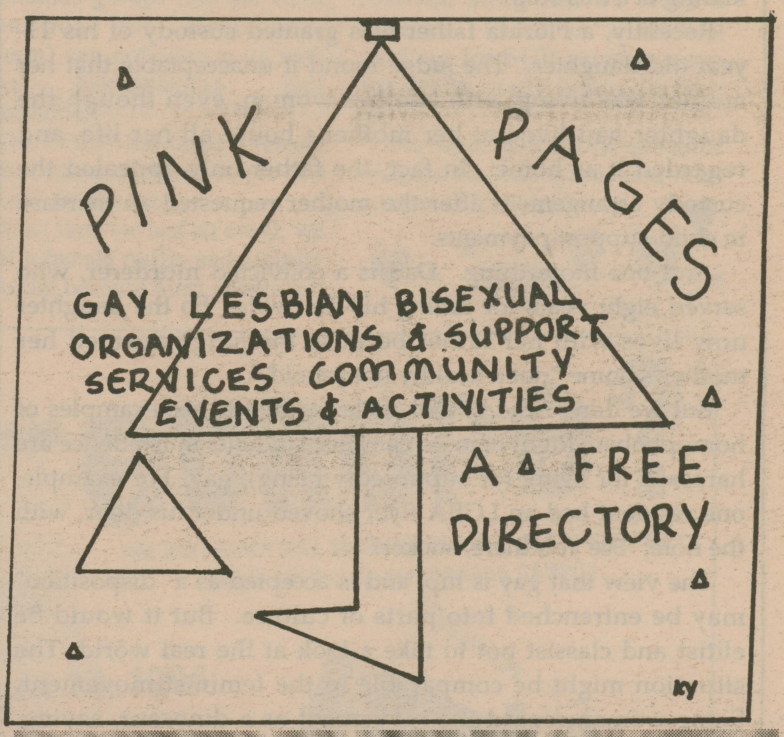
The Pink Umbrella also compiles a monthly calendar of community events and activities.

"We're a clearing house for information exchange and a public voice for the community," Boyd said. For example, she said that the Pink Umbrella spoke for the community as a whole when they made a presentation to the Victoria city council on the issue of public nudity in last year's gay pride parade.

The *Pink Pages* is a free directory. It will be available at various distribution sites on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Everywoman's Books and AIDS Vancouver Island are two definite sites, Boyd said.

"A *Pink Pages* web site will also be up and running soon," she said.

Boyd said she expects next year's directory to be even larger than this year's. "It is only going to get bigger and better," she said. "With the amount of response we're receiving, we can expect it to double." ❑



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EDITORIAL

Out of the closet, into the Walmart?*

kd lang luxuriates in a barber's chair, flanked by a scantily clad Cindy Crawford on the cover of *Vanity Fair*. *Priscilla, Queen of Desert* proves a box-office draw, inspiring a lame spin-off with Patrick Swayze. Victorians brave sub-zero temperatures to get tickets for Melissa Etheridge's Memorial arena show.

Looking at pop culture, it might seem that gay activists can put away their picket signs, and consider the message received. As the chant went at the Gay Games: "We're here, we're queer, and we're not going shopping."

But everyone else is. In music, films, TV and in street fashion, mainstream North America is embracing many aspects of gay culture. So why do we still need to have a queer issue?

The *Vancouver Sun* recently ran a feature on "The unbearable normalcy of being queer." It proposed that gayness is emerging as an "orientation," and becoming regarded as a "trait," similar to left-handedness. This may be true in intellectual and artistic circles, but it's harder to believe when we look at the way our society actually works.

That straight society accepts gay characters on sitcoms, or gives gay musicians radio play, is probably a step forward. Perhaps RuPaul was right when she hollered, "It's hip to be gay!" to the Wigstock throng.

Then again, North America also steals from other cultures: witness the corporate success of rap music. But this hasn't changed systemic discrimination. Maybe the message is, we'll syphon out the parts of your culture that appeal to the masses, but we won't really change our power structure.

Being queer may be hip, but would the same crowd chugging coffee in the Etheridge line-up accept two women kissing at a bus stop?

Recently, a Florida father was granted custody of his 11-year-old daughter. The judge found it unacceptable that her mother was living with another woman, even though the daughter had lived at her mother's house all her life, and regarded it as home. In fact, the father only appealed the custody arrangement after the mother requested an increase in child-support payments.

And one more thing. Dad is a convicted murderer, who served eight years for killing his first wife. So the daughter now lives with her father because the judge deemed her mother's home "not a healthy household."

But we don't need to look as far as that to see examples of homophobia. Right here on campus, students in residence are harassed for being (or supposedly being), gay. For example, one resident had an LGBA flyer shoved under his door, with the note: "See you there, sucker!"

The view that gay is hip, and is accepted as a "disposition" may be entrenched into parts of culture. But it would be elitist and classist not to take a look at the real world. The situation might be comparable to the feminist movement. Some women regard the movement as a dinosaur, saying, "I'm not a feminist, because I don't believe women are better than men."

These are women benefitting from the sweat of decades of suffragists, who toiled to get women voting, working, and going to school. And today, many of the ideals espoused by the feminist movement are ingrained into our society. Yet the image of strong, powerful career women is used in advertising to sell beauty condiments. Women quietly kept down, for profit.

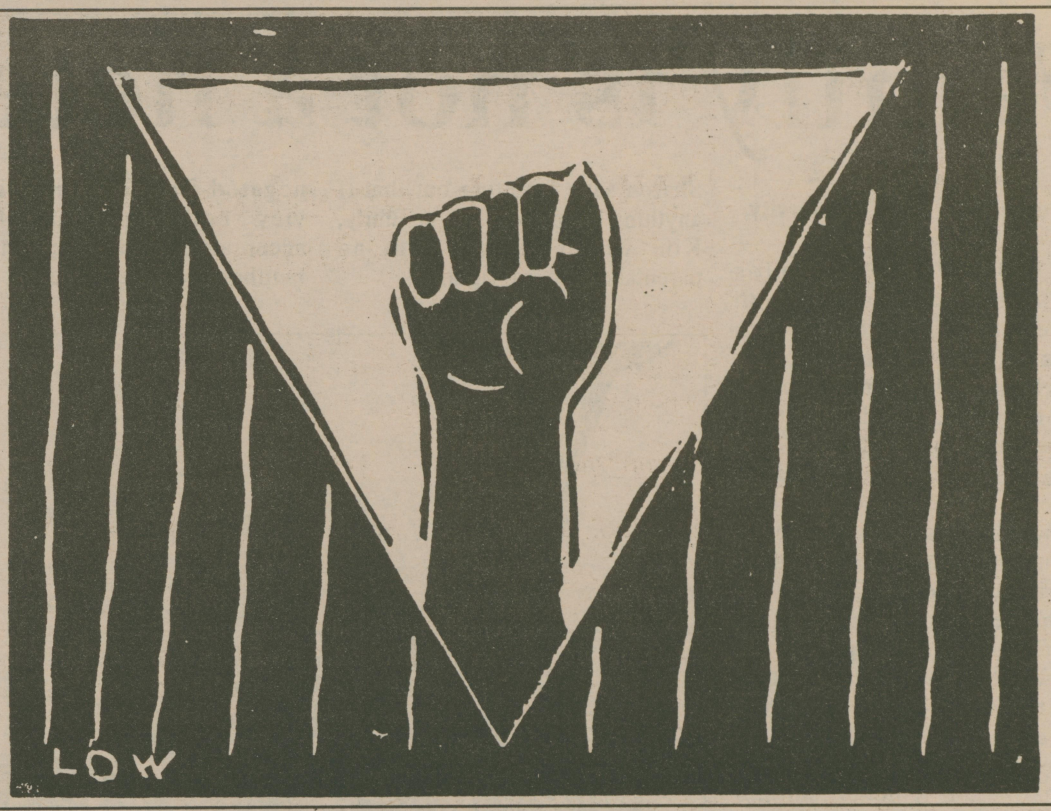
So capitalism pillages, and working women are hip. Drag queens are cool. Movie characters are gay as the day is long. Though, if Matt from *Melrose* is any example, their lives are one-dimensional and they never get to kiss. But can women, or queers, walk the streets at night, safe from assault, or bashing?

Consider a letter from a *Sun* reader, in response to the "unbearable normalcy" feature. The man advocated that those *suffering* from homosexuality get the respect they deserve. Obviously, he isn't left-handed.

Maybe when it's not hip to be gay, we won't need a queer issue. ▼

* DAVID LOW

Editorial topics are decided by staff at editorial meetings, every Monday at 4 p.m. in the Martlet, *L Hut, rm. 55. Editorials are written by one or more staff members; opinions are not necessarily those of all staff.*



The *Martlet* has an open letters policy and will undertake to print every letter received from members of the university community, with priority to undergraduate students. Letters must be **TYPEWRITTEN** (you can use *Martlet* computers), submitted on disk, or e-mailed, and include your name and phone number for verification. **LETTERS MUST BE 200 WORDS MAXIMUM.** Letters will be reviewed for libel at the *Martlet* editorial meeting, 4 p.m. on the week of publication. Deadline is Monday noon. Letters will be prioritized in the order received. Only one submission from the same person will be printed per week. Letters with pseudonyms or group names will not be printed. Letters will not be edited for spelling or grammar. Announcements will be directed to billboards. Letters can be mailed to Box 3035, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C., V8W 3P3, dropped off at L Hut, rm. 55 , (by the tennis courts). or e-mailed to martlet@sol.uvic.ca.

Coffee shootout?

Editors:

Kudos to Dane Gibson for his informative article on the increasingly annoying coffee debate. The question I have is: Are students' interests being represented by the BoD and their hard-line stance for "exploitative-free" coffee? It seems irrational for the BoD to spend $26,000 on new coffee machines when Canterbury will offer free machines and servicing. I'm still choked that my trusty UVSS mug now costs 50 cents to fill, instead of the 30 cents in the old SUB; I definitely do not want another price increase to pay for the BoD's machines. And to me it is more important that Canterbury is a B.C. owned and operated company unlike American owned Bridgehead. However, I do understand that not every student will agree with me. But not every student agrees with the BoD either. So why not let the students decide? How about having a coffee shootout – serve Canterbury and Bridgehead side by side for a couple of weeks and see which students buy more of? To be fair, Bridgehead should be sold at a higher price than Canterbury, so students will have an accurate picture of what Bridgehead will cost if students choose it. So how about it, BoD? Let students decide with their wallets?

Erik Schindler

Reverence for hemp

Editors:

It's 4:20 pm on Saturday at the Hemp Rally. A collective cloud of herbal smoke rises; a reverence to itself, and for some people, a divinity. The smoke celebrates personal choice and the right to spiritual freedom. It also obscures the purpose of the rally.

Legalizing the cultivation and manufacturing of hemp, and legalizing the use of marijuana are two very separable issues. Both are passionately sought. But for now, a distinction has to be made. When we smoke marijauna at a hemp rally, we are debilitating the efforts of advocating hemp as a practical solution to various environmental degradations. For example, hemp provides the alternative to atrocious clear-cutting practices. It is, in essence, a godsend for our hurting earth. For anyone still wondering why and how, I suggest an educating and enchanting journey to Sacred Herb (106-561 Johnson St.) to fill your cup.

I believe that if hemp is to be considered as a viable option, the smoke has to clear. Are we grappling for marijauna users' rights, a personal freedom, or are we after something bigger, a "higher good." Hemp can alleviate the economic (and thus, ecological) strain put on forests. This, clearly a common interest, is a huge step in a more respectful and earthly way of living. We need to get over ourselves and emphasize the benefits that hemp potentially holds for earth.

Jen Meurer

Praxis Nexus funded by many

Editors:

Sharon Bennett, in "International Focus on Feminist Praxis," Thursday, January 25, 1996, stated that funding for the Praxis-Nexus: Feminist Methodology, Theory, Community came only from the Humanities Centre. This in fact is not the case. There were several funding bodies, the Humanities Centre provided the **core** funding.

Other funders included the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, the Faculties of Law, Humanities and Arts and Science, the Departments of Women Studies and Geography, UVSS – Women's Centre, GSS, the Centre for Sustainable and Regional Development, and the Women's History Planning Group. External Funds were provided by CIDA and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

Pamela Moss
On Behalf of the Praxis-Nexus Planning Committee

The Martlet

Quote of the week:
" It would have been a naked breakfast and a Naked Lunch."
– Ashley McIsaac on being propositioned by William S. Burroughs

• Dorothy •
Adrienne Mercer
•Wizard of Oz•
Mikusz Nicusz Ross
• Where the fuck's toto?•
Meesha-lucy-chan Grubisic
• Marketing and Revenue Director •
Jess Howard
• News Editor •
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Student Voice

What's happening with the UVSS budget?

The following are the figures for the Students' Society actual costs of operation to budgeted costs for the year to date ending Dec. 31, 1995 for two departments.

Department	Actual	Budgeted
Board of Directors	$(133,221)	$(114,527)
Food Services	$(17,259)	$ 10,981

Decisions made by the Board of Directors and by the UVSS membership which will have an impact on these figures.

1)Increasing executive director salaries by $2,410.31 x 4= $9,641.24 (passed October '95 AGM).

2)Paying executive extended health and dental premiums: $2,858.88 (passed October '95 AGM).

3)Paying directors at large honorariums for meetings: $11,440 (proposed February '96 Semi-AGM)

4)Closing SUB for February 7 Day of Action: $5,120.85 (passed Jan. 22, '96 BoD Meeting.)

5)Paying rental fee on coffee equipment for Bridgehead: $5,926.20 (passed Nov. 8, '95 BoD Meeting).

As Director of Finance for the University of Victoria Students' Society, part of my responsibilities are to ensure that the Board of Directors act fiscally responsible.

The factual information provided above proves this year's Board does not even care about the overall financial situation our society is in. They have made decisions against the Finance Committee's recommendations, they have passed motions that have been against the advice of the professional managers of the Student Union Building, and they are running our society into the ground. Soon we will not have to worry ourselves about where our dollars go, because 100% of them will be going towards paying off our debt.

The executive I work with, and the Board I am on, will be very quick to point the overall responsibility at me. When you have the majority of the Board of Directors ignoring the advice of the Finance Committee, we can only turn to our members - STUDENTS - to raise your voices, and get to the February 15 semi-annual general meeting.

Ian Flemington
UVSS Director of Finance

Student Voice

Steaming over coffee coverage!

I have been following the SUB coffee debate from the beginning and have been growing more and more angered by *the Martlet's* biased, pro-corporate, inept reporting of the situation. Dane Gibson's February 1st article was the last straw.

My primary complaint is *the Martlet* has never covered the issue from any angle other than MONEY. Reading *the Martlet* one will find the free-market attitude that money is the bottom line, and any attempt by non-corporate organizations to make a positive difference in the world is maligned.

According to Gibson, many students feel, "If it's not broken, why fix it?" Looking beyond our cosy university life, we can see the coffee trade is badly in need of "fixing." Coffee pickers (often children and pregnant women) work long hours for little pay, have no access to health care or education, and are exposed to pesticides banned in Canada. Any attempt by workers to unionize, to demand decent wages or working conditions are shot down – often by right-wing military. Like it or not, we support this kind of exploitation every time we drink a cup of coffee.

But UVic students and the BoD want to put a stop to this kind of exploitation by drinking only fairly-traded coffee, in this case, Bridgehead. "Exploitative-fee" is not, as Doug Carol, a Canterbury sales representative, was quoted, "a marketing ploy just like any other."

I am surprised that *the Martlet* printed that quote as it only embarrasses Mr. Carol by showing his total ignorance about fair trade. "Exploitative-free" is not a ploy, but rather the basis of Bridgehead's fair trade philosophy. Bridgehead buys only from worker-controlled co-operatives, pays fair wages set by the producers themselves, and gives back to the producers any profits to help aid in local government. Bridgehead is a non-profit business. Ethics, not money, is the bottom line.

Gibson's erroneous statement, "Oxfam is a rapidly expanding business," is a source of amusement for anyone who knows Oxfam. Oxfam is a non-profit development organization, not a "business." Misinformation like this is only serving to muddle the coffee debate further.

So, wake up and smell the coffee. Fair trade is neither cheap nor convenient. It is an incredibly complex issue with no easy answers. It would be appreciated however, if *the Martlet*, instead of focusing on expensive urns and distribution problems, would remind students exactly what Bridgehead is all about. Anyone having further questions about Bridgehead or fair trade should feel welcome to call the local Oxfam office at 360-0799 or Shopping for Justice at 995-1264.

Heather Miksch

CINECENTA
DOLBY STEREO
UVSS
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
2:30 MATINEE, 7:00 & 9:10

GET SHORTY
LATENITE
The Princess Bride
FRI & SAT LATENITE 11:15 ONLY
SUNDAY & MONDAY
2:30, 7:10 & 9:15

PERSUASION
TUES
7:15 & 9:15
The Incredibly True Adventure of Two Girls in Love
WED
7:15 & 9:10
JEFFREY
QUEER AWARENESS WEEK

SEX ON THE TABLE: LUSTY

Naomi: So where are we going to start? Do you want to start with desire?

lisa j: Sure, talk about your desire a bit. Your specific desire, what do you think desire is, how do you define desire, or how do you know it when you feel it?

Naomi: Well, how do I know it when I feel it? It is an entire body sensation. It sneaks up on me from the inside and explodes, and it can take me out of this plane of existence.

lisa j: So are you talking about when you see someone and you feel desire, or the kind of desire that you feel when you're engaged in sex?

Naomi: Both.

lisa j: Because, are they different, or are they the same?

Naomi: Hmmm ...they're pretty close ...pretty, pretty close.

lisa j: Well, what I think about desire, because my desire always has been – since I've been a dyke — has been so specific, because I mean, Tracy and I laugh about this all the time, because I'm often around a lot of womyn because I'm so political and everything, and there are very few womyn that I'm attracted to. I see a lot of womyn that I like as friends, but I mean, I can count – I've been with three womyn in the last year, and before that no-one for over two years. I have a specific desire for really, really butch womyn, so a butch woman will often catch my eye. But I can remember – and Tracy and I talk about the time when we met (and we met at a bar, can you believe it – how "lesbian soap opera story"), but the reality is that she came up and I put my hand on her back and that was it – I mean as soon as we touched each other. So it was about desire, but it was also about an immediate connection of some kind that had to do with magic and all that also. I felt like the top of my head was going to blow off that night. That was about desire I immediately felt for her. It was specific to her, something that I don't feel [when I'm just] walking around.

Naomi: I guess I'd have to say the same for me, I mean I don't have just interest or attraction to everyone, actually I have few attractions. The real attractions in my life I can count on one hand ...but when that happens it is like you said, it's a sense of magic, it is a sense of a spiritual connection beyond just physical contact. That's what I mean by it taking me out of this plane of existence, because it's on more levels than physical, it's not just contact, although that usually... [laughter]

lisa j: ...is nice also!

Naomi: Whew! ...it can just take me away.

Laurie: Right now I am feeling very overwhelmed by desire.

lisa j: Tell us!

Laurie: Oh! There's so much ...I was talking about it with a friend today, how desire for us is so passionate and amazing that we can't put language to it, because it is such a body experience, that sort of feeling, and we can communicate it with each other, but not in a textual way. Right now I'm calling myself "queer" and then say, well technically I'm "bi," and just going through this process of labeling and locations. But I'm in a totally loving relationship with a man, and I'm so excited to be with him. He is very amazing, and then there's the womyn! Womyn are turning my head left and right. One night I started reading this amazing lesbian erotica book called "Pearls of Passion," and I finished it off the next morning – I was so drawn into it. I brought it to one of my friends saying "read this, read this," and she's like "OHH!" I just don't know what to do with it all. I'm trying to focus it into the physical, but it's just that I have so much to do – I just have this passion that's making me really spaced out in my daily work ...it's taking me over! [laughter]

lisa j: Cool!

Laurie: That's why I phase out – I was getting passionate.

Mira: I can be attracted to almost anyone ...[laughter] there's that old thing, "bi's, anything that moves." I find that my attractions for womyn are infinitely more simple. I don't usually get attracted to men unless they are really effeminate bottoms, and I can just flip them over and fuck them. But with womyn ...well, I guess my major criteria there is also if they enjoy being flipped over and getting fucked [laughing]. I'm stone, and I'm definitely a top from hell, and I take really good care of my bottoms. So if I see any womyn, especially butches, who look like they might be butch bottoms, oh, I'm toast. Short hair is especially fine.

lisa j: Well, I know one but she's in a relationship right now.

Mira: Lately I've been really attracted to Jewish womyn. It's not so specific with Jewish womyn, as long as I know they're Jewish, and I can identify their look as something Jewish, because I'm Jewish, and it just resonates with a part of me. So if they're butch, short hair, Jewish, kind of girl-jock – they've got me! [laughter]

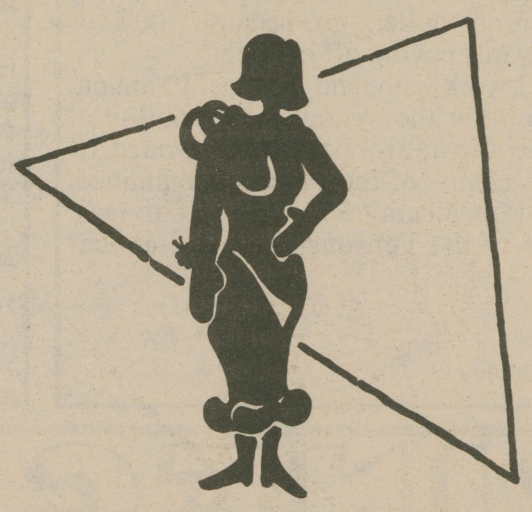
lisa j: Ooo, nothing like a woman who knows her desires!

Naomi: Gosh, I like that!

lisa j: So do you consider yourself "femme"?

Mira: NO!! Not at all, I'm a girl-jock, a stone girl-jock ...I mean, no femme has muscles like mine, that I've ever met anyway. But I'm not butch, I know I'm not butch. Even when I dress up in a suit I don't look butch ...but when I dress up in a dress, I sure as hell don't look femme.

Naomi: Oh, that's an interesting twist in the conversation – what does butch and femme look like then? How is it that you are identifying butch and femme? I mean I know a butch "look" and energy, because usually that's what I'm attracted to. It's predominantly butch womyn who turn my head, but what identifies butch and femme for you?



Mira: It's so hard to say ...for me it's not the way someone looks, it's a vibe being given off, and it's not that butches are strong or femmes are weak – that's really cliché – but there are some womyn who just have a presence that I associate with butch, and some womyn who have an equally strong presence that I associate with femme. It's so hard to define, for me. Thoughts?

lisa j: Well, it's not how you dress, because there's been a of couple womyn who I've met since I've been in Victoria who thought I was butch. And that would be because I wear jeans and a leather coat and boots, but that's more because of my being working class and being a survivor – you know, it has more to do with that. But when they look at me and people think I'm butch, it's just hilarious, because they are basing it totally on exterior, which for me has got nothing to do with it. Tracy and I laugh about this: we can both be standing – and we have done this, we've both had on jeans and a black T-shirt and boots – and its obvious that she's butch and I'm femme. You know, so it's not about clothes. I like your language – that it's the vibrations, because I can tell, I mean I'll be in a room full of womyn and it's like "voom! there's the butch over there!" It's like I zero in on her and that's about my attraction, my erotic attraction. The more butch/transgender, the better. It's taken me a while to come to terms with that. For years, you know, three or four years ago, I used to walk around thinking "oh well, I just like womyn that have short dark hair." No! I can expand it a bit now. For me it's really specific ...for me, the sex and the desire and the passion is totally different when I'm in bed with a butch than when I'm in bed with another femme. The last femme I slept with, we laugh about it because it was great, and it was comfortable, and she's a really good friend, and it was so fucking jangly. And that's the word we had to use to describe it because – put me in bed with a butch and I know what to do ...you know, I can work this, I can do this. But with another femme it's like "Oh, well what are you going to do? I don't know, what are you going to do?" It was fun but we both sort of walked away going "oh, that was nice, see ya later." It's just different for me. My desire is just so specific ...and that's why I wanted to have this talk. Not that it is going to make sense, or that it has to make sense but to own our desires and take up space saying 'I'm femme & I love butch womyn!'

Naomi: So how do you define desire?

lisa j: Well, I feel that tonight we are talking about sexual desire. So that's different for me, because I'm trying to also look at desire as a desire to work, and a desire for my spirituality, and a desire for everything in the world. But when I think of sexual desire, it encompasses so much more for me than casual sex. I mean, I did that for years, I was really promiscuous, and I don't know how to do that anymore. Sometimes I wish that I could. [laughter] I'll see a womyn and she wants me and I'll go "Damn, I don't know how to do that anymore!" But for me it's about so much more because of my spirituality and being a witch and my relationship with Tracy. It's about sexual desire, and it's about spirituality, and it's about connection, and it's about magic, and it's about ... so much more than just sex, for me now that I'm involved with someone that totally meets me. Sexual desire for me changes, it shifts ... some nights I'll just want to be held and adored and stroked, and I'll want it really soft, and other nights I'll want to get out the toys and let's go wild. That shifts depending on my mood also, so for me it's not just one, it's both - or anything else in between. Ya, I like it!

Laurie: For me, butch/femme is a new thing. But I've been starting to think about it a lot lately. And I remember I was sitting and reading "Stone Butch Blues", in public, and was picking it up and I totally saw things differently - there were things that I had just never noticed before, and I'm just so fascinated by butch/femme. In my community of bisexuals, no-one (that I have been aware of) has been saying butch or femme, and I'm wondering why that is, and there's a lot of herstory to butch/femme. It's just like, whoa, I didn't see this before, and I'm wondering if anyone can shed some light on it. Also I'm curious about the androgyny that I am seeing in bisexuals ... and is that on par with the lesbian or dyke community? In the lesbian/dyke community now I'm starting to see butch and femme. I've spent like three weeks now looking, but I don't know.... I'm throwing things out, help me.

Mira: Dykes?

lisa j: I think bisexual womyn fear appropriating the butch/femme from the lesbian community and I

WOMYN TALK ABOUT DESIRE

think that that's valid. Maybe that's why. Most of the womyn that I know who consider themselves bisexual are somewhat androgynous but most of my interactions are with dykes.

Naomi: I guess because I sense butch and femme to be about energy or, as you said Mira, vibration and because I know womyn who would identify as lesbian and womyn who would identify as straight that have the energies I associate with butch and femme, to me it just seems strange that wouldn't extend to the bisexual community.

lisa j: Well I think the vibration is there, but maybe not the butch/femme vibration. I mean many, many lesbians do not consider butch/femme as part of their reality. Right? So I think a vibration is still there between womyn and between men, or between whoever, but maybe it's not butch/femme.

Mira: I'm just thinking of the bisexuals I know and thinking "wow, they're butch, they're femme." I think there are some bisexuals who really strongly identify with butch/femme – just like there are some bisexuals who identify stronger with sex with womyn than with men – I mean I don't have sex with very many men, and I probably have sex with men less than some womyn who call themselves lesbians. I think bisexuals are such a huge range – you know – some womyn are way extreme bisexual butch, and some, it's not part of their lives. Most bisexuals I know – except here – I don't know, maybe class has something to do with it, because here most of my bi friends are middle class. But most of my bi friends outside of here are working class, from working class backgrounds, and they are butches or femmes.

lisa j: Right. The butch/femme look came from working class. Often the middle class has much more to lose, due to their privilege, and butch/femme is very visible. The working class could own butch/femme more because they didn't have as much to lose, whereas the middle class focus on moving up and being accepted, and the way to do that is to be androgynous. Shades of 70's lesbian feminism.

lisa j: Why don't we talk about tops and bottoms?! [Laugher, oohs, aws]

Naomi: Okay, now see this is all a language that is still a little bit foreign to me, and for the last three years I've been reading and reading about butch and femme, and reading about tops and bottoms. And I still don't quite ...I think I can label myself ...and ...I'm going to get myself into trouble aren't I?! [laughter] I'm definitely a bottom, from my understanding, in that ...I definitely like to be appreciated. I definitely like attention. Not to say that of course tops don't like appreciation and attention, but I think that there is a power play in which I enjoy giving myself over and allowing myself to be adored.

lisa j: I like to be adored ...I'll be quite honest about hat ...and it works much better in long distance relaionships, because every time I see her, she's so glad to ee me, she just adores me. And I think it would be mpossible to keep that up on a day to day basis ...and I lon't know how adorable I could be either. [laughter] 'm a bottom, and people are always amazed. "You're a ottom!" and I'm like "Well, not in public!" ... I have my ersona to work on there! I like being done to. I like to ubmit. The way that I see it is that I will give up that art of myself to you, and you take me – I will allow you o take me somewhere, where I haven't been taken efore. So it's about power, and it's about balance ...and 's about vulnerability, and it's about trust ...in a certain ay, that I will give you this, and you can take me here. will give you this gift of myself.

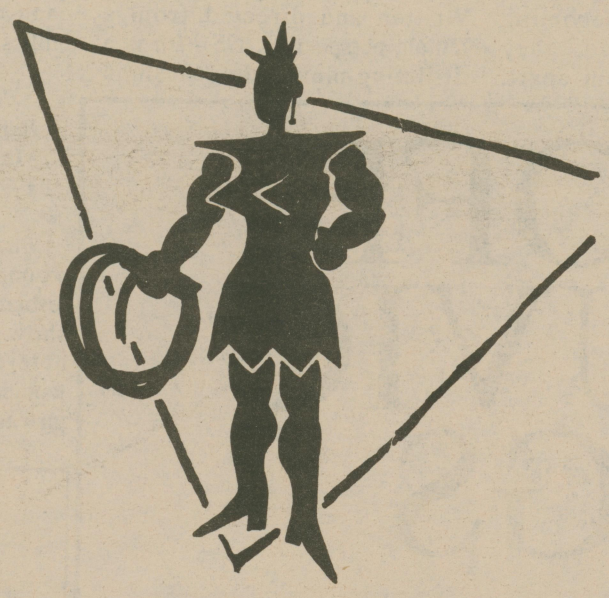
Naomi: YES!! For me, that's a fundamental, wonerful thing that occurred when I started seeing womyn. ecause when I was with men, it was definitely about taking. It was, you know, not about giving myself over to another person, but about fucking, in a big time way, and taking what I wanted. Whereas with womyn ...there has been that shift for me, where it's definitely like I want to give myself up to a connective desire, and, Oh! [laughter]

Mira: From a top's perspective – this is interesting, I don't often hear bottoms talking this way! I'm a top in that I get intensely turned on, and intensely satisfied, by giving my lover everything (and I do mean everything) that she wants. Because I like doing it, I've become good at creating a space where my lovers can ask to be done in any way they want to be done. So my desire is for lazy bottoms, who will soak up my desire to adore and satisfy them. I said I was stone – I am just coming to know that after reading *Stone Butch Blues*, which was the first time I had ever heard anyone use that word stone.

lisa j: Can you define what that means for you?

Mira: I don't like to be touched, I don't find it erotic. I mean I know it's complicated by a lot of shit, you know: abuse, rape, violence, blah, blah, blah. The bottom line for me is that I just don't get turned on by people touching me. And I find that my worst fear is that I will abuse someone else, and I <u>have</u> abused other people in ways other than sexually. So for me, having someone trust me enough to put me in a position where I could hurt her, and to know that I will respect her boundaries, is immensely erotic. As someone who knows my own capacity for violence, and the potential for sex to be violent, for someone [else] to acknowledge that potential and still trust me enough to let me touch her, especially when someone can ask me to do something that is really vulnerable – that's the trust that turns me on.

Laurie: Well, up until this conversation, top/bottom was totally new terminology, never heard it before. But, I have to say bottom. Just that I love to be adored. Yeah, it's just such a great feeling, just the ...just the uhh! Yeah!



Mira: Oh my God, I'm in a room with three bottoms! Sit on my hands! Sit on my hands! [laughter]

lisa j: Quick! Turn the tape off! ...It's a specific way of being adored though, because it's about being adored sexually. Because I adore my girlfriend – er, I mean my boy/girlfriend – I just fucking adore her! But there's a way that she adores me that is different than the way that I adore her. And that has to do with the power and our exchange of power. But I find it amazing that there are three womyn in this room that would call themselves bottoms, because there's this big, big sort of "shh, shh, we're all tops! all of us!" There's this thing, like when we were sitting in the [queer issue] production meeting, and there were eight womyn in the room, and we were talking about submissions for this paper, and Tathra said "I don't like that word, we have to change that word," and I was like "hey! I like that word," 'cause I'm a bottom.

Mira: Oh, she's a total top, of course she'd say that!

lisa j: And I said I love to submit, and everyone just cracked up. There's this whole negative stereotype about womyn being submissive, so if you own "bottom," people just go "oh, you're just being the stereotype of woman who's submissive." [groans and "no's"] But do you know what I mean?

Naomi: Yes I do, I'm following you there. But I think for me something that's been interesting is recognizing the shift between when I was with men, and being with womyn. I was definitely top. That was definitely my state of relating in our lifestyle together. In my last relationship with a man, I was much more ...I definitely felt like I was top/butch and he was bottom/femme in all aspects of our relationship, in a big time way, because that was just how we related and that's how that relationship has always felt. Which is fascinating to me now because I am no longer fighting for the space to be myself in my current relationship like I did then.

Laurie: I think that this includes a sign of strength and individuality and of pride, of being strong. And I think that there can be misconceptions of bottom, and I see some issues of that not being valid, and that there is strength in all aspects.

lisa j: When I hear you talk about how you were with men, I think about how I was with men, because I was with men for a long time – but I was a brutally raped child, it was when I was very young, and I learned that sex was about power, and it was about dominance and violence. And I also learned when I got older that sex was something that I did well. So I feel that most of the time that I was with men, if not all the time, that it was about me taking the power, and me being top – like make them want me more and more and more.

Naomi: Totally ...totally!

lisa j: Because that was something that I did really well. And that's not at all what I'm wanting with womyn, its not like that at all. So that was about acting out – for me, with promiscuity, and all my control issues about men – to just have them begging on the floor for more, and then just walk away. And that's what I always did, and it's totally different for me now with womyn. I was just saying to Tracy that, you know, boys don't count, they don't count honey, they were just boys ...but she won't go for it. [laughter] But it is different. And as much as I adore being bottom, sometimes I don't mind being top. We talked about this once before, that there's nothing more attractive than a butch on her back right?

At this point the tape deck started smoking & the rest of the conversation was toast! But there was lots of interesting stuff that got lost so Mira, Naomi and Laurie felt they had more to say (see after sex on the table). Since I had already outed myself as a bottom (gulp) I felt that I had said enough – its really amazing – Laurie said that she was more confused than ever, Mira had discovered she's butch (like that's news) & Naomi & I are in BIG BIG trouble! We had the audacity to discuss our sexual appetites without consulting our masters!! (We have been very, very bad bottoms & need to be disciplined! please? sir?) Luckily we both have boy/girlfriends that like bad girls so I think we're okay. (Honey?) But regardless – what's done is done & you know what? It was a hell of a lotta fun!

– lisa j.

The Martlet thanks the members of the LGBA for their work on this issue and their help with story ideas. Keep on contributing!

Mind-blowing Billy Tiptons

by Karen Kelly

Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet
Open Space Gallery
Feb. 4

The excited crowd was audible even outside the gold doors of Open Space Gallery. Inside, people sat on the floor drinking margaritas and waiting for the concert to begin.

Seattle band Zamora, headed by singer/guitarist Alice Zamora, opened the night. Zamora's voice was incredible and the band had definite talent, but the lyrics of the first set of songs were weak. Lines like, "if heaven lasts forever then forever I will be with you" were just plain sappy, but one of the last songs, "It's Not Justified", made up for it. The song dealt with AIDS and was written by Zamora's partner, Monica Zamora, a nurse who has treated people infected with the disease.

"I search for the spirit inside the music ...after a while the spirit shines through."

"Each time I sing the song, I have to tell myself not to cry," said singer Alice Zamora. "It's such a sad song."

The Seattle-based Billy Tiptons took the stage shortly after Zamora, and they blew the audience away. The all-female saxophone quartet played music that couldn't be classified as jazz or pop, but something entirely unique. Their performance was full of energy and each of the players did her own thing while still keeping the act together.

"I search for the spirit inside the music, whether it be from Czechoslovakia or Mexico," said baritone sax player Barbara Marino. "After a while the spirit shines through."

The concert was part of Focus '96, which showcased women performers. It was the closing performance to what has been considered a highly successful week-long event. ❑

When jazz sax player Billy Tipton died, an autopsy revealed that he was actually she. During her celebrated 50-year career, few, other than her wife, knew her true identity.

Billy Tipton lives.

Pamela Holmes photo

Lesbian relationships on film get graphic ratings

by Patricia Murray

Heavenly Creatures
Peter Jackson
1994

Mainstream movies do not like to represent homosexual characters because they destroy the misconception of universal heterosexuality. Lesbian characters are only depicted if they titillate the male audience, if they conform to traditional social feminine standards (i.e. wear make-up and have long hair), or if they are psychotic serial killers (*Basic Instinct*). This diffuses the threat and makes the characters closer to society's version of the "norm."

Independent, or low-budget films, on the other hand, present a more realistic depiction of lesbian relationships by showing friendships and female bonding, not just sex.

Heavenly Creatures is a refreshingly original movie, based on a true story and told from the young female protagonists' points of view. It explores the close bonds of female friendship, demonstrates the turmoil outsiders feel as they try to rebel from the norms of society, and lets viewers into the minds of the two girls, seeing the world as they do.

Working class Pauline and wealthy Juliet appear to have nothing in common, but soon become fast friends. They create their own private fantasy world where they lose touch with reality. When their parents notice that the two girls are becoming passionately involved, they conspire to split them apart, displaying homophobic attitudes. Pauline and Juliet are so caught up with each other and their "fourth world" that they counter-conspire and end up murdering Pauline's mother.

This movie would be perfect if it excluded the life-size clay fantasy figures from Pauline and Juliet's fantasy world because they destroy its imaginative quality.

Go Fish
Rose Troche
1994

Despite its unpolished script, unprofessional actors and low budget, *Go Fish* is an entertaining and creative independent film. Written and directed from a female perspective, *Go Fish* is a titillating movie about lesbian relationships. It explores committed relationships, new relationships, and sex-only relationships, as well as all of the flirting, jealousy, family problems and moral dilemmas that come with them.

The story is centred around Max, an aspiring writer, and her circle of lesbian friends who set her up with a friend of a friend because they can't stand her constant complaints about her non-existent love life.

Go Fish succeeds in presenting the different aspects of lesbian relationships and lifestyles. For example, in one scene, Daria, the "slut" of the group, gets caught sleeping with a man and is ostracized because of it. Another scene depicts the dykes protecting each other from homophobic bullies.

Bar Girls
Marita Giovanni
1995

Bar Girls is the perfect example of a stereotype of the lesbian bar scene. It attempts to show the similarities between heterosexual and homosexual women's dating frustrations, but instead it suggests that at heart all lesbian women are really heterosexual. All of the women in the film wear make-up and act femme, with the exception of one dyke who is the stereotype of butch.

The movie revolves around Loretta and her relationship with Rachel, a married woman. The plot is typical Hollywood: girl meets girl, girl loses girl, girl tries to win back girl but is faced with the obstacles of backstabbing ex-girlfriends. The movie is forced to end when there are no more coupling possibilities left; everyone has already slept with everyone else. Could it have a happy ending? Wait and see. Or better yet, don't bother. ❑

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Queer toons exist in town

by Andrew Musgrave

If you've been curious to find out what queer comic books are like, wonder no longer. Canada's customs laws make them difficult to find, but queer comics do exist in Victoria. Those who search diligently can even choose from a variety of publications.

If, on the other hand, you have a real beef with the patriarchy, you might prefer Hothead Paisan.

If you are looking for something tame and introductory, *Dyke's Delight* is a good place to start. Printed in Bristol, England, *Dyke's Delight* is an anthology of comic strips and comic-book-style stories. The contents cover topics such as cats, the dating scene, and what makes a woman a "realesbian."

Not willing to restrict itself to one particular style, *Dyke's Delight* has something for everyone. It is entertaining, realistic, and funny. Nothing is really abrasive.

If, on the other hand, you have a real beef with the patriarchy, you might prefer *Hothead Paisan, Homicidal Lesbian Terrorist*. Hothead takes on sexism, racism, and homophobia the only way she feels is left — with large weapons.

Accused at one point of going soft, *Hothead Paisan* comes back with a vengeance. In her fourth anniversary issue, Hothead tells an acquaintance how men are 82 per cent more likely to hog an airplane's armrest, while in the corner of her room lies a tangled mess of severed arms.

The humour is bold and blunt, and the targets range from men to... er... men. The fan mail provided at the back describes it best, calling *Hothead Paisan* everything from a "psychological fix" to "therapy." Sorry, guys, you get the short end of the stick on this one. The only queer comic for men available on my excursion was *Leatherboy #1*, the epic story of a space-alien turned superhero.

The story begins with Leatherboy's fall from grace, as rumours of homophobia tarnish his good image. Convinced that defeating the arch-villain Maxmaster is the only way to make everything right again, Leatherboy puts on a leather thong and seeks him out.

Maxmaster defeats Leatherboy in their first encounter, then proceeds to take out an army battalion with... well, I'll let you guess.

Maxmaster, also an alien, is here on earth trying to find a mortal man who will survive intercourse with him. Armed with an oversized phallus and an extra-terrestrial creature called hornyslime, Maxmaster defeats Leatherboy in their first encounter, then proceeds to take out an army battalion with... well, I'll let you guess.

Unfortunately, queer comics are usually found only in a comic book store's X-rated section, if at all. Many get stopped at the border, finding themselves subject to Canada Customs' archaic indecency laws. However, queer comics are out there, and when you do find one, you can often get more through subscription. ❑

No Hallmark stereotypes at LGBA celebration

by Adrienne Mercer

LGBA Coffee house
SUB Multi-purpose room
February 14

Valentine's Day is traditionally associated with paper hearts, candy, and images of smooching heterosexuals. But the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Alliance (LGBA) will be celebrating without help from Hallmark.

The LGBA's February 14 coffeehouse will feature Percy Lazard, "a two-spirited dyke from Penticton," said co-organizer macdonald flatt-scott. Admission will be determined on a sliding scale, from free to $10.

"Valentine's Day is traditionally a big display of heterosexual love," said flatt-scott. "We want to show that heterosexuality is not the only way to express love and affection."

This is the second large-scale social event held by the LGBA this term. They are also planning a dance for March 22.

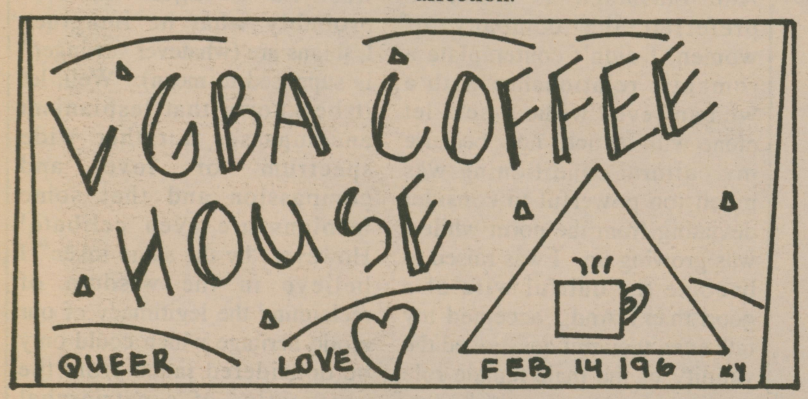
"It is becoming known in the Victoria queer community that the LGBA is really active."

"It's exciting to have well-attended, visibly queer events on campus," said flatt-scott. "It is becoming known in the Victoria queer community that the LGBA is really active. I think it's important to send a message that on-campus groups like the CDR (Coalition for Democratic Reform) can not silence us with their homophobia and lesbophobia."

The LGBA has hired a female SUB security attendant to provide security for the event.

"Last time we had an event, we hired a female traffic and security attendant because most people felt more comfortable with a female security person," said flatt-scott. "We hired out of shop and realized after that we made a mistake. There is a woman working for SUB security now, and we're really happy to have her."

For more information about the coffeehouse, call macdonald flatt-scott at 477-7644. ❑



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COMING OUT GRRLS, COMING OUT BOYS !?!!

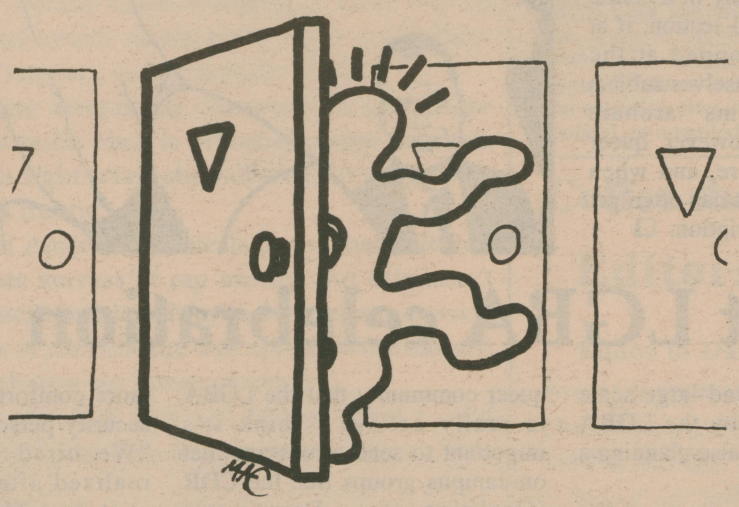
- by mm jones and David D'Andrea. revised by Barb Barta

University is a time in our lives when we confront many things for the first time. School... finances... friends... and most importantly, our identities apart from our high school peers and our parents. We can either remain overwhelmed or look at this time as a gift; we are able to define our boundaries, our politics and ourselves independently (relatively) of our personal herstories/histories. For example, I should have known I wasn't straight when I was 10 — that's when I loved The Dukes of Hazard and had just as many posters of Daisy in my room as Luke or Bo. For some reason, it wasn't until I moved on from Cape Breton Island that, over time, I realized that womyn loving womyn (and men loving men) is not only normal, it is me.

The process of self-discovery is longer for some than others. We confront so many stereotypes that despite our own feelings, we don't know what to believe. Sometimes, if you know that you're queer, it can feel like there's nobody else like you around. Or maybe you're not sure exactly what your sexuality is, but you don't think that you're quite straight, and the whole thing makes you very uneasy. For many young queers, the idea of "coming out" is almost unthinkable — the costs in terms of social reaction may seem overwhelming. Even admitting your homosexuality to yourself may be just too threatening.

"Coming out" can mean acknowledging to yourself that you're gay or lesbian or bisexual or whatever! It can mean telling your friends and family. It can even mean publicly declaring your sexuality (say, by writing this article). Coming out to yourself is the biggest step — once you've faced your own sexuality and are comfortable with it, the rest comes more easily. Most people find that coming out helps to deal with negative attitudes toward homosexuality — their own and those of the people they come out to.

Not everybody comes out in the same way, and not everyone should. Some people tell only close friends, and wouldn't dream of telling their parents. Some people feel it's important to tell their family, while others don't think it's worth the bother. Who you come out to, and when you do it, is your own decision. It may be influenced by cultural factors, the quality of existing relationships with the people you want to tell, or your political convictions. Come out when you're ready and don't let people pressure you to keep quiet if you want to come out.



I wish I could say that coming out is "great!" but I can't. It is the most liberating thing I have done in terms of my personal sanity. But we don't live in vacuums – no matter how insular our group of friends can be — so be aware of how others react to your orientation. It's better to be "out" than in the closet – at least 75 per cent of the time. But that other 25 per cent... makes you rethink why you ever did it. Then you have a staring contest with a chyck in Moral Philosophy class. Or you go dancing at Rumors. And you remember.

UVic is actually a good place to come out. The atmosphere is a lot more accepting than most places you may have been. Bisexuals are in a somewhat different position. A lot of people, when they are first coming out, are experimenting with their sexuality, and may feel attracted to members of both sexes. For some people it's a phase they go through when coming out, and that's okay. Then again, some people (like me) remain interested in both womyn and men, and that's okay too. But you are bound by as much politics in the l.g.b.etc. community as you were in the straight world. For example, say the word 'bisexual' to a bunch of fags and dykes to see how they react. Victoria is much more bi-positive than other places, but we still hear bi-phobic statements all the time, particularly outside the university context. But at least the queer world is more tolerant.

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Alliance (LGBA) on campus works hard to make UVic a supportive and comfortable place. They meet as a discussion group on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. and do political work on Wednesdays at 11 a.m. in room 137A of the old SUB (beside the Cinecenta desk). Call 721-3083 for info. There are great books on queer issues at Everywoman's Books (Johnson St.) and dancing at Rumors (Government St.). There are lots of great ways of being out in Victoria. Have fun and be safe!

Coming out strong

Dear Editor

Ever since I "owned-up" to being a lesbian, the ill effects of my cultural conditioning became all too apparent. I initially attempted to remain invisible, by feigning a romantic interest in men which heretofore was an embarrassing topic. Before long, living a lie became too disconcerting. So I resolved to "come out" and face my greatest fear, i.e. that my straight friends and associates would imagine I was after their asses in spite of the evidence to the contrary.

What I did was "come out" to my daughter, which proved disastrous, as I suspect an associate of hers "spilled the beans..." Thus I've most probably provided an opportunity for some pretty juicy gossip. However, being rather queer is not a particularly unique phenomenon for me. I was only able to stay married for a couple of years because I didn't like not having any say in the relationship. Then I raised my daughter without the arms of a man. I also became an anti-prohibitionist and returned to university after my daughter grew up.

When I look back on my life and think of all my platonic relationships with men, I realize how much I liked being just one of the boys, even though I don't fit the "butch" stereotype. I didn't especially want to have sex with men and believe I forced myself to submit due to social pressure. I got married for the same reason. The last significant male in my life was a lovely person, however, I was unable to have any physical contact with him whatsoever. And inasmuch as I always preferred the company of women, I didn't contemplate a romantic relationship with a woman (even without sex, let alone with it) until now because my cultural conditioning was much too powerful to consider deviating from the norm while I was growing up. I was raised to become the dutiful wife of a good man. And I accepted my fate even though I questioned the validity of the male/female role relationships at a very early age. I persisted in trying to live up to the social expectations for females in spite of the fact that all my romantic relationships with men left me cold, i.e. were neither emotionally nor sexually fulfilling.

Although I do not consider my sexuality a matter for public scrutiny, I'm nevertheless adamant about being deprived of the opportunity to select my sexuality with dignity and respect (a long time ago). I was literally robbed of my "birthright"! The right to determine one's own sexual preference was recognized by many cultures in pre-Christian times and is an issue that needs to be reckoned with today! Therefore I believe it is necessary to exert an effort to end the repression and persecution directed toward those of us who are compelled to follow the dictates of our hearts and consciences: to love who we wish!

Quite a volume of excellent literature is available on the subject of lesbianism. I discovered a particularly informative book entitled, *A Straight Woman's Guide to Lesbianism* by Mikaya Heart who succinctly dispels all the myths surrounding the issue.

In summary, I'm delighted to have overcome my homophobia, which is rather extraordinary considering that I was sooo homophobic that even my homophobia was "in the closet." So it is indeed a joyous revelation: to be a dyke! I have never felt more "normal" in my life, i.e. everything fell into place for me. Thus I intend to be happy and gay and celebrate the ecstasy of my awakening for evermore!!! Does the aforementioned statement convey that I'm going to fuck my brains out? Last Saturday a man in Everywoman's bookstore claimed an artistic interest in the nude female figure on the "Dykonography" poster along with making it known that he wasn't a "swinger" which is probably what he imagines lesbians are (whatever "swinger" is supposed to mean). Well, let it be known that lesbianism encompasses a rather wide spectrum of love and compassion and that some lesbians are even celibate! However "by the same token" I believe in the wisdom of reclaiming the legitimacy of our erotic heritage which could only be considered jaded from the perspective of a patriarchal context.

Phyllis Kahn
Victoria, B.C.

Martlet Editor Positions

Okay, we promised you more information.

There are two positions available, one for MANAGING EDITOR and one for EDITOR IN CHIEF. Positions are half-time through the summer and full-time from August 16, 1996 through April 31, 1997. Full-time salary is $850.00 bi-weekly.

Editors are responsible for:

•writing and editing stories
•editorial content of *the Martlet*
•operations of the *Martlet* Publishing Society
•staff and volunteer training and management
•ensuring weekly production of the paper
•taking flak and grinning happily

Editor in Chief applicants should have experience with writing, editing, layout, and deadline enforcement. Previous journalism experience is an asset.

Managing Editor applicants should have experience with administration, marketing, personnel and business management, as well as writing and editing experience.

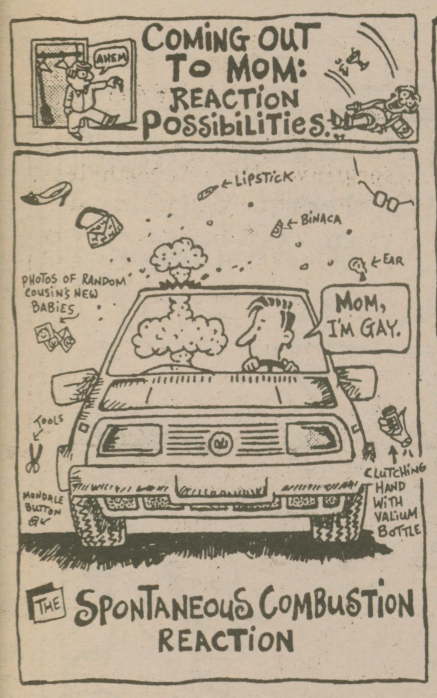
Deadline for applications is 5pm, Friday March 8.
For more information, call 721-8360 and ask for Adrienne or Miko.

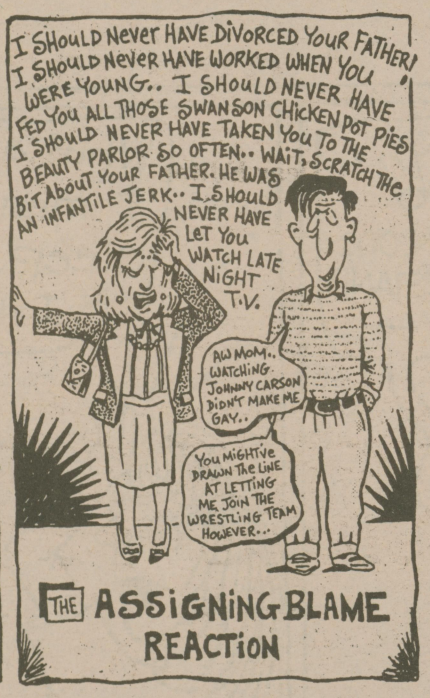
The Women's Centre needs Volunteers

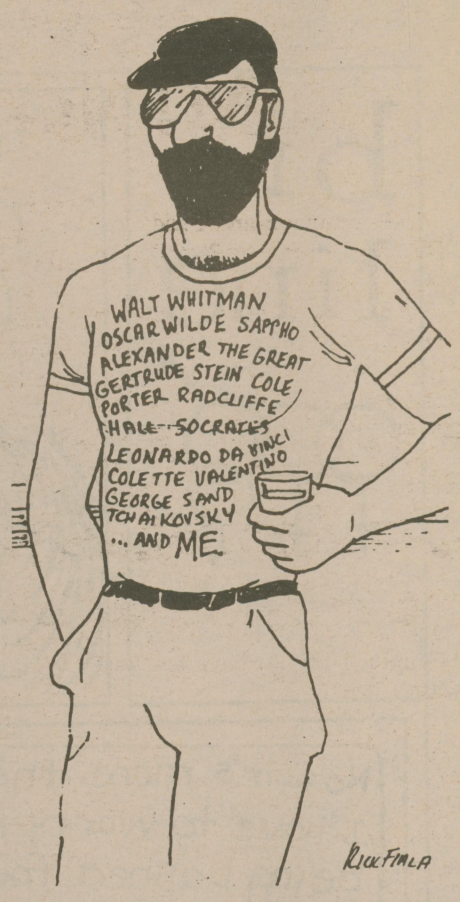
for International Women's Week - March 4 - 8.
Meetings are every Monday, 2:30pm in the Women's Centre. Located in the old SUB.
Working Groups Include:

Advertising
Craft Fun & Buskers Corner
Film Festival
Work & Play Shops
Eating Disorders Awareness Week Feb 5 - 11

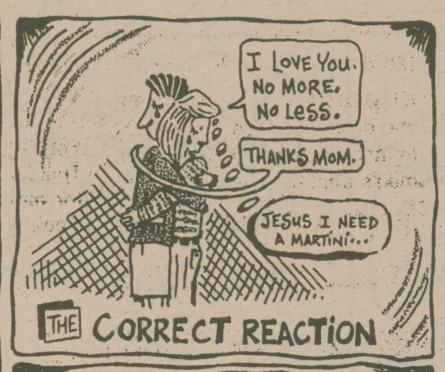
For Information please contact Laurie at 721-8353.

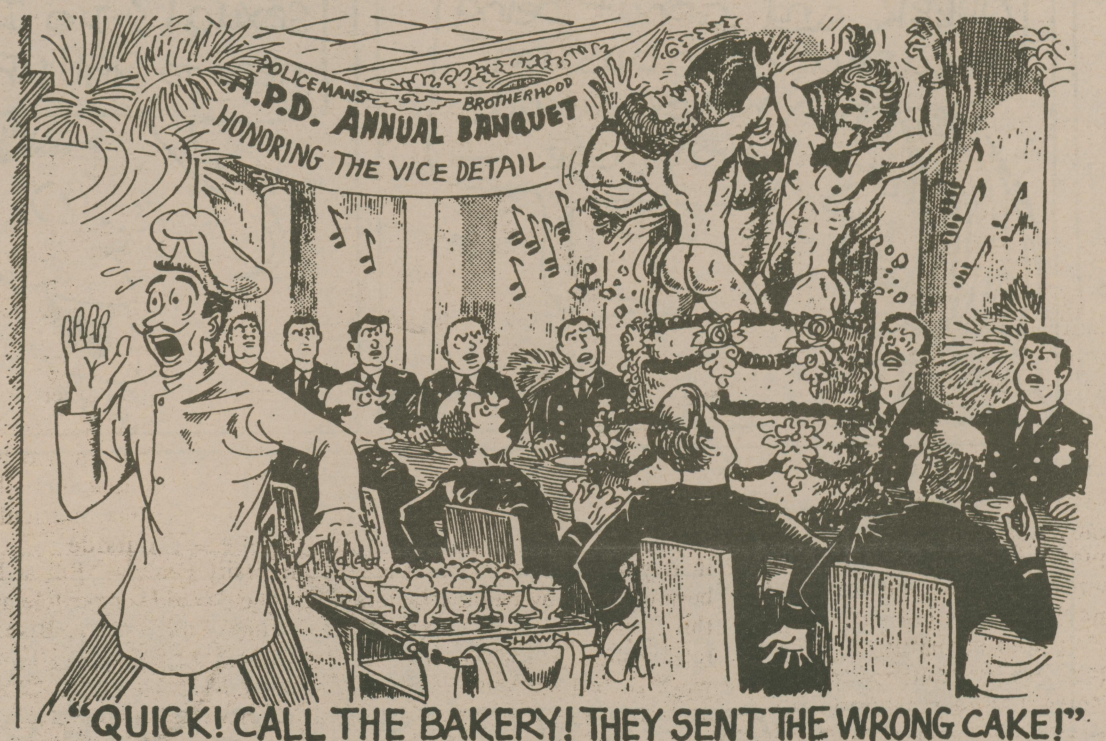



I SHOULD NEVER HAVE DIVORCED YOUR FATHER! I SHOULD NEVER HAVE WORKED WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG.. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE FED YOU ALL THOSE SWANSON CHICKEN POT PIES I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TAKEN YOU TO THE BEAUTY PARLOR SO OFTEN.. WAIT, SCRATCH THE BIT ABOUT YOUR FATHER. HE WAS AN INFANTILE JERK.. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LET YOU WATCH LATE NIGHT T.V.
AW MOM.. WATCHING JOHNNY CARSON DIDN'T MAKE ME GAY..
YOU MIGHT'VE DRAWN THE LINE AT LETTING ME JOIN THE WRESTLING TEAM HOWEVER...
THE ASSIGNING BLAME REACTION



MOM, I'M GAY..
SKIP THE COFFEE AND BRING ETHAN'S MOM A DOUBLE MARTINI.
WELL.... I'M REALLY GLAD THAT WE HAD THIS TALK....
NICE SARCOPHAGUS.
THE NEEDING TIME TO ADJUST REACTION





Household Sadists
BY CAMPER
YOU'RE GONNA LOVE THIS!
HEY KIDS—ITS TIME FOR YOUR BEATING!
AND YOU'RE GONNA STAY TIED UP—
D'YA HEAR?!
TALK TO ME, DAMMIT!!
OK, BITCH, GET READY 'CUZ I'M GONNA MAKE YOU NOW!
BEG ME!

G-STAFF BOX

EDITORIAL TOON & COVER DAVID LOW

STAFF TOONIST SPIKE CHILTON

COMIX PAGE EDITOR & SOON-TO-BE PULITZER PRIZE WINNER ANDREW MUSGRAVE

ALL COMIX FROM OLD MARTLETS EXCEPT BI-LINE FROM CHERYL PETERSON

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† Participants must possess a valid International Student Identity Card (ISIC).

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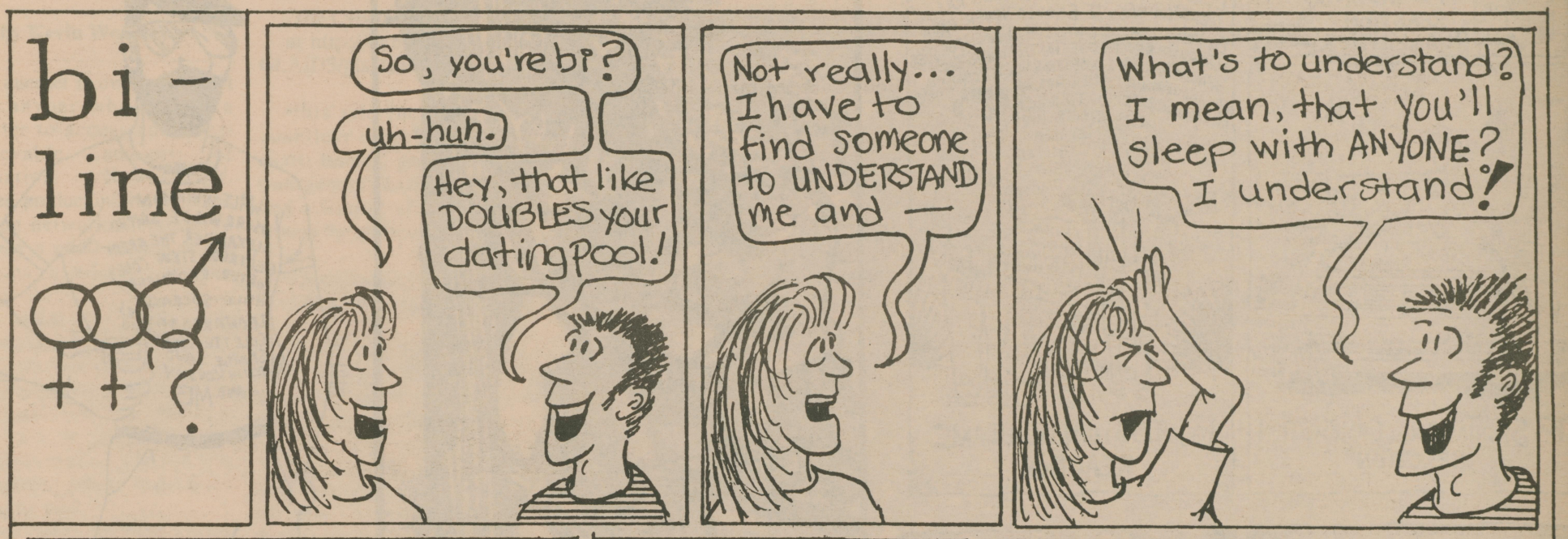
bi-line
So, you're bi?
uh-huh.
Hey, that like DOUBLES your dating pool!
Not really... I have to find someone to UNDERSTAND me and —
What's to understand? I mean, that you'll sleep with ANYONE? I understand!
No...it's more than that. I have to worry about being bashed for being QUEER and about being accused of abusing heterosexual privilege —
WHOA! You mean I get privileges for being hetero-sexual? Do I need to SIGN UP?
How many more people do I have to EXPLAIN this to?
Did I say something wrong?

SEMI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA STUDENT SOCIETY

February 15, 1996
1:30 to 4:30
Cinecenta in the old Student Union Building

Exercise your DEMOCRATIC right!
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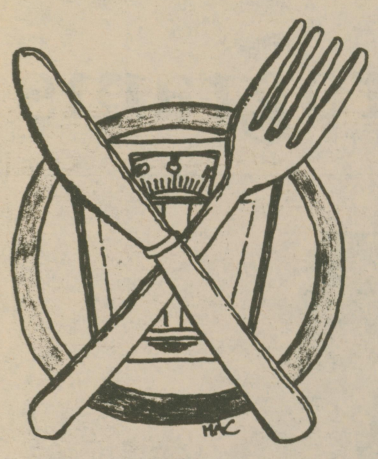
UVSS



• February 8 •

Eating disorders awareness week. The eating disorders program in the Capital Regional District will be hosting a public forum at the Lecture Theatre, Victoria Conference Centre. The topic is "Taking our own Shape — Women, Body Image and Society," presented by Karin Jasper, PhD, MEd. It will be held Thursday Feb. 8, 7-10pm. Admission is $20. For students or the non-waged, it is $10

Calling all past participants of **Canada World Youth, Crossroads, WUSC and CUSO!** If you are interested in connecting with other "alumni" or doing joint activities, please come to a potluck meeting Thursday at 6:30. For info call Kelly at 595-5831.

• February 9 •

The department of economics at UVic presents a seminar by Ian King "Old Dogs Learning New Tricks: Human Capital Vintages, network Externalities And Economic Progress." The seminar will take place from 3:30-5:00 in Cornett B335.

Medicine at UBC: All interested students are invited to attend a general information meeting with Dr. J. Carter of the University of British Columbia Faculty of Medicine. 12:30 to 1:30, room A180, University Centre Building.

Biking in traffic so you (think you-want to) know how?!! Check your skills. See free cycling video. Sub 137 A from 12:30 - 1:30.

Cafe Simpatico presents a slide show called "Indigenous People of South East Asia" by Bernard Henin. Live music by Kumbia will follow. Proceeds will go towards humanitarian projects in Central America. The cost is $5.00 General, $4.00 low income. 1923 Fernwood Road from 8-11. For info call 598-7690.

•February 11•

Violinist Erica Raum will present a recital at the church of our lord 626 Blanshard at 3:00 pm. She was the winner of an international Mozart violin competition in Budapest, Hungary in 1992. Tickets can be purchased at Ivy's Book shop or Ward Music. 384-6846.

Dykonography: a lesbian art show, **Feb. 9-24,** 1996. Fourth floor, Victoria Eaton Centre. Opening 8pm, Feb. 9. Gallery hours: Saturday - Thursday, noon - 6pm. Friday, noon - 9pm. For information call 995-0147.

• February 10 •

The Early Music Society of the Islands is pleased to present the Canadian debut of the baroque ensemble, Ensemble Rebel, 8pm, February 10, St. John's Church, 1611 Quadra St., $15 general, $14 seniors, $13 members and $8 students. Tickets available at Munro's Books, Musical Friends, and at the door. For reservations, phone 592-6580.

• February 13 •

"Uneven Development: A Comparison of China and India". A seminar by Ajit Bhalla, Pearson Fellow, International Development Research Centre Ottawa. 12:30 Cornett B135.

• February 15 •

Asia Bound? Come to the "Asian Crossroads," a student information fair, to find out about study, work and travel opportunities. Feb. 15, 1-4pm, UVic Centre.

Pacific Opera Victoria presents the first Canadian staging of Montemezzi's *L'amore dei tre re.* (*The Love of Three Kings*), February 15, 17, 20, 22, and 24 at the McPherson Playhouse. Tickets range from $15 to $58 and can be purchased by calling 385-0222.

•February 16•

The Sidney Reading Series is hosting an outstanding literary event at Pelicano's Cafe and Bakery in Port Sidney. Acclaimed Vancouver poet and fiction writer J.A. Hamilton is the featured reader. Also appearing is Rebecca Fredrickson, a promising Victoria poet. Reading begins at 7;30pm and admission is $2/$1. Complimentary refreshments. For info call 656-6905.

Iranian residents of Victoria are meeting for discussion around the formation of a new non profit organization. It will deal with various social and cultural issues. All are welcome Feb 16, Clearihue C305 at 7pm. For more info call 472-8699.

• February 17 •

An Edwardian Parlour will lead you back to Edwardian times with music and verse. Vaughan Williams, C.H. Parry, Stanford, Elgar and Sullivan will be performed. It starts at 8pm at the Metropolitan United Church.

Tickets are $12 general, $9 seniors/students. Tickets can be purchased from Ivy's Bookstore, Munro's Books or Ward Music. For info call 474-4829.

•February 17,18•

Wenlido personal safety classes for women...by women...learn to deal with aggression and assaults. Saturday and Sunday from 10-4:30. For students $35, $55 for non students. For information phone 721-8353

Calling for volunteers for **International woman's week March 4-8.** Help organize a film festival, art show and coffee house. Any other ideas? Women Craftmakers/Artists/Musicians welcomed to sign up for the craft fair. Free tables advertising, first come, first serve. deadline Feb. 20. For info call 721-8533.

• Ongoing •

The Grad Class Committee is now accepting proposals for funding for student and campus group projects and events. The deadline for submitting a request for funding is January 31, 1996. Proposal forms are available for pick-up and drop-off in the SUB info booth.

Do you want to make a difference in the lives of your peers and yourself? If so, join the **UVic Date Rape and Dating Violence Education Project**, and help promote safe and healthy sexual relationships through education and activism. Open to women and men. Meetings on Wednesdays at 1:30 in SUB 137A or contact the Women's Centre @ 721-8353 for more exciting details.

If you are interested in forming a **course union** please contact Ana UVSS Director of Academics 721-8369.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education is pleased to announce the 1996 CIDA Awards. The award will fund Canadian citizens who wish to increase their skills and knowledge in international development. For information, contact the Canadian Bureau for International Education, Attn: CIDA Awards Division, 220 Laurier West, Suite 1100, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5Z9, fax (613) 237-1073 or e-mail ctaha@cbie.ca or lvezina@cbie.ca.

The Assembly of BC Arts Councils invites all artists residing in the province of BC to submit works to its 14th annual juried art exhibition, Images and Objects XIV. Will accept artwork of all media and sizes including traditional, contemporary, and indigenous work. For further information please contact your local arts council, Robyn Quaintance 656-4444 or Kathy McDonald 656-660.

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Notices

Hampton Orchestra: seeking new players, esp. cellists. All ages welcome. For more info. call 388-3093.

Primitive Lifeskills Ancient fire, shelter, tools, awareness etc. Instructor Wes Geitz was taught by Tom Brown. Info: 478-3110.

Send your Valentine a Valentune by Esquimalt secondary school music program. Delivered anywhere in Victoria; February 14, 9am-9pm. A love song will be played by a group of our band members when they present your special gift and card. $10.00. Order now! Call 388-7991.

Lost black canvas bag. Driver of Blue family sedan from Metchosin 474-1966.

•Volunteer Opportunities•

The George Jay Elementary school would like to offer volunteer positions to Education students. Provide assistance to children individually or in groups , with math or reading, or help in arts or sports. For more infocall Tessa Loyd at 385-3381.

Find out how to work, volunteer or studyin one of 130+ countries. Contact Carpe Diem Opportunities at 1-800-344-5443 or e-mail carpe@fox.nstn.ca.

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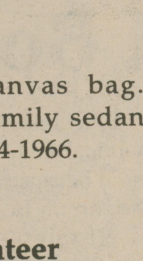

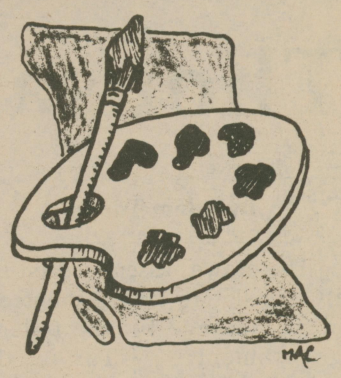

Thai government Scholarships are being offered for post graduates, undergraduates and junior undergraduate students from foreign countries to conduct research work, or to attend colleges and universities in Thailand in 1996. The application deadline is February 29. Write to The Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 350 Albert St., 7th floor, P.O. box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, KIP5V8. (613)566-4325

Psssssssssssst

•TMDS,
YCKMN
LaLaPIO,
Caw, Caw, Flap, Flap.
It's all so special,
Just like you.
YDDOR

• The Parisienne got towed while i was buying supplies downtown. Guess I should pay my parking tickets.

• the crazed lobster crawled up on the beach, looked around and rolled his pretty black eyes. he had left the water out of intense curiosity. who the fuck was stomping around so much?!

• i see lipstick on your cheek, cherise, and it sure ain't my shade.

• strike me a match. strike me a whoollle lot of 'em.

• doctor, you forgot your stethoscope. pick the fucking thing up or it's going to goodwill.

• peaches, please don't go green over keanu.

• i saw you. i thought you looked like an undercover cop, especially with that haircut. but instead i discovered you were Canadian. happy belated 'b' day, slickstah. xoxogoob

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Thousands protest cuts to social programs

by Adam Turner

The crowd, assembled on the BC legislature lawns, shouted a clear message for the federal government. "Tax the Corporations – fund education."

The Victoria protest was part of the nation-wide Canadian Federation of Students' (CFS) February 7 pan-Canadian day of action to fight cuts to social spending.

Anti-poverty groups, women's groups and social justice organizations joined students to protest federal cuts to social programs.

This year, 4000 supporters listened to a variety of speakers who shared their perspectives on the impact of cuts to social programs.

"I always believed that the only thing no one can take away from me is my education."

Beryl Parke, a Haida Nation student from Camosun College, was invited by the Coast Salish Nation to give an official invitation to the protesters. Legislature land is part of an outstanding landclaim by the Coast Salish people.

UVic professor Radhika Desai rejected a vision of post-secondary education where only the "materially and culturally privileged elite" can afford to go. She rejected the new focus on "training for jobs that only ministers think are there."

The rally built on last year's January 25 Day of Action, when 5000 people protested on the legislature lawn..

This year, the focus of student protest is on those who are not paying their fair share.

Record bank profits and corporate profits show the problem is with government revenues, according to Maura Parte, Chairperson of the Camosun College Student society.

Solidarity against cuts.

Mary Vallis photo

"Students are fed up with being told that the federal government can no longer fund social programs." she said.

UVic student and SUB employee, Tracy Dean spoke about the problems of making ends meet for student parents. Hikes to post-secondary education might mean she will face what she once thought was impossible.

"I always believed that the only thing no one can take away from me is my education," she said.

Before the rally, Ana Torres, director of academics for the UVSS said, "Canada needs a highly educated workforce to compete in the global economy, yet they aim to create an education system for the wealthy only."

At UVic, the Senate and Board of Governors supported the protest but did not cancel classes for students to attend. Most professors, except one in Chemistry and two in Math, cancelled tests after a request to do so by senate. Camosun was more supportive. The Board of Governors passed a motion to shut down the campus from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

High school students were an integral part of the protest. Victoria School District refused to cancel classes, but Oak Bay Secondary School students could miss classes with parental permission.

There were many ways of contributing to the protest. North Island College student Stacey Slager sent her message through a placard. "Today's students will pay for your retirement. Don't cut us out."

"The cuts will impact on everybody, not just students and the poor," she said.

At press time, protesters were preparing to march through Victoria in opposition to the cuts.

Students can question BC politicians about the future of post-secondary education when Dan Miller and Wilf Hurd debate at the UVic Student Union Building. The debate starts at 1p.m., February 9, in the multi-purpose room.❑

Union and BoD clash over electoral officer hiring

by Calinda Brown

A hiring decision may put the results of this year's University of Victoria Students' Society elections into jeopardy, while it has already further strained relations between the Board of Directors and the Steelworkers' union.

Tom Sluchinski, a supervisor at Felicita's, applied for the chief-electoral-officer position for this year's election. Although he met the minimum requirements advertised and has four years seniority in the Steelworkers' union, the hiring committee offered the job to a candidate with less seniority.

"[Sluchinski] needs to accept the fact that he didn't meet the minimum qualifications and didn't get the job."
–Tina Walker

That decision violates the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the union and the UVSS, which states seniority will be the prime consideration in any hiring process.

Sluchinski said this decision is political and that he has not been hired because he is an unknown to the current BoD.

"It taints everything," said Sluchinski. "The position that is supposed to uphold the rules is already corrupted because of the hiring committee's actions."

As well as ignoring the collective agreement, the hiring committee also extended the deadline for applications by two days because they said "no qualified applicants applied." Sluchinski submitted his application on noon of January 29, the last day the job was originally posted, and was given an interview time the next day.

"It's another case of this year's BoD making the rules up as they go and changing them when they don't suit their purposes," said Pam Ness, vice-president of the Steelworkers' union. "It's not the first time the BoD's personal agenda has gotten in the way of morals, ethics or responsibilities."

As soon as the hiring committee finished, the Steelworkers' president and representative on the committee, Angie Sorrell, contacted Ness and informed her the hiring had not been properly conducted and there were grounds for a grievance.

"We were suspicious of the two-day extension," Ness said. "Then we learned the person who got the position had two years less seniority than Tom [Sluchinski]."

The union filed a grievance with Ross McKinnon, administrative coordinator of the UVSS, on Feb. 5, demanding the hiring committee's decision be overturned and Sluchinski be offered the job and any lost pay. The policy and procedures guide for the UVSS gives McKinnon the power to take such an action.

A decision will not be made until February 12 when McKinnon returns from a skiing holiday. That is one week into the job of chief electoral officer and only four days before candidate nominations close.

Tina Walker, a member of the hiring committee and chair of the UVSS, doesn't feel there is any grounds for grievance.

"I'm familiar with election policy. And I'm familiar with democracy and that they're trying to fix it."
–Sluchinski

"As far as [the hiring committee] was concerned, one internal applicant met the minimum requirements and they were offered the position," she said. "[Sluchinski] needs to accept the fact he didn't meet the minimum qualifications and didn't get the job."

But Sorrell, the union representative on the committee, disagreed.

"In a four-person committee, (including McKinnon and another UVSS rep) only two determined he didn't meet qualifications. They said he wasn't familiar with the UVSS elections policy."

Sluchinski researched for his interview by reading the chief electoral officer's job description, a handout describing the duties, the section on elections in the UVSS policy and procedures guides, and reports of election misconduct and results from back issues of *the Martlet*.

"I'm familiar with election policy. And I'm familiar with democracy and that they're trying to fix it," he said. "There's been a lot of monkey-business around the election the last couple of years. It has to be run so every student has the right to vote and have their ballot counted.

"There are tons of examples from last year where rules were broken and no one was disciplined," he said.

Sluchinski wondered what else he could do to familiarize himself with election policy short of actually having the job.

Ness agreed Sluchinski should have a chance to prove himself.

"The intent in the last round of bargaining was if you had someone who was borderline on qualifications they would be given a chance to prove ability in recognition of long years of service," she said.

The next step depends on what McKinnon decides when he returns, but the union is prepared to take the UVSS to arbitration if Sluchinski is not offered the position and lost pay. ❑